

Topic: Reducing Diesel Exhaust from School Buses

What is the Hazard or Problem: Numerous scientific studies indicate that exposure to diesel exhaust can cause lung damage, respiratory problems, premature death and lung cancer. It also aggravates asthma, the leading cause of school absenteeism. Air pollution from diesel vehicles has health implications for everyone but children are more susceptible to this pollution because their respiratory systems are not fully developed.

The Solution: There are a number of effective strategies for reducing diesel pollution from school buses. Actions that school districts can take include:

1. Establishing guidelines to limit idling time on school grounds.
2. For school districts that own their buses: consider retrofitting buses with advanced pollution controls. Fueling buses with ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel and installing pollution controls called particulate matter filters can reduce emissions by more than 90 percent.
3. For school districts that contract for bus transportation: consider requiring retrofitted buses for all, or a portion of, your fleet.
4. Educating bus drivers. Since informed drivers idle their vehicles less, this is an easy and effective way for schools and their transportation providers to reduce excess pollution at and around schools.
5. Working closely with bus companies to purchase the cleanest new buses.

Applicable Regulations/Consensus Standards:

The Environmental Protection Agency is working to reduce diesel pollution from new buses and trucks by setting more stringent emission standards that will take effect beginning in 2004. In 2007, new trucks and buses rolling off the assembly line will be 95 percent cleaner than today's models.

Massachusetts law and regulation prohibit unnecessary idling of all motor vehicles that are stopped for a foreseeable period of time over five minutes. This includes cars, trucks and buses and other vehicles.

Who in your Town or School Can Help:

School transportation officials, school administrators, as well as the public health department can help develop and establish anti-idling guidelines. Officials from MA DEP will help schools and bus companies develop anti-idling guidelines to reduce diesel emissions. Officials from EPA New England will help school districts find local sources of ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel, provide information on available retrofit technologies, and assist in the development of pollution control programs.

Whom to contact for free Government or Other Assistance with the Problem:

MA DEP:	Frederick Civian, Frederick.Civian@state.ma.us	(617) 292-5821
MA EOEA	Tony Chaves, tony.chaves@state.ma.us	(617) 626-1009
EPA:	Lucy Edmondson Edmondson.lucy@epa.gov	(617) 918-1004
	Christine Sansevero, sansevero.christine@epa.gov	(617) 918-1699
	Dan Brown, brown.dan@epa.gov	(617) 918-1532

Further Reading (include Electronic Resources if Applicable):

EPA NE website on diesel exhaust:	www.epa.gov/ne/eco/diesel
EPA national website on diesel retrofits:	www.epa.gov.otaq/retrofit

